



News Release

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CONTACT: Victor Herrick

(760) 768-9373

vherrick@parks.ca.gov

Improvements to Facilities Being Planned

California State Parks takes title to Heber Dunes SVRA

Public Asked to Help with Changes Designed to Improve Visitor Experience

California State Parks announced today that Heber Dunes State Vehicle Recreation Area (SVRA), also known to locals as "Heber Beach" has been transferred to State Parks and will now be both owned and operated by the Department's Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation (OHMVR) Division. The property is located on Heber Dunes Road, near the intersection with Hwy. 7, about 3 miles north of the international border.

For the past eight years, the OHMVR Division of California State Parks has been operating Heber Dunes SVRA under a lease agreement with Imperial County. As of December 14, 2008, OHMVR Division will have title to the property. State Parks has been working with Imperial County for the past two years to secure this transfer. With title to the property, State Parks will now have the ability to make needed improvements. The area will continue to be operated under the Ocotillo Wells District for the purpose of off-highway vehicle recreation.

In assuming ownership of the property, the OHMVR Division will be instituting some much needed changes to provide a safe and enjoyable recreational experience at Heber Dunes SVRA.

State Parks will begin a program for improving facilities at the park, to include:

- New restrooms
- Several new shade ramadas with fire rings and tables
- Construction of a youth training area

Vic Herrick, the new Supervising Ranger of Heber Dunes, is focusing on education of visitors and youth in the area. In his short time on site he has seen a need for training since many of the park visitors are new to the recreation. The new training area will provide a safe, challenging and closed area for training and practice.

Contracts are also in negotiations with the California Conservation Corps for tree trimming and trail maintenance. Resource studies are under way to ensure the program balances recreation with resource management to provide sustainable long term use for the future.

In order to ensure the provision of safe off-highway vehicle opportunities, beginning January 1, 2008, the park will become a day-use park. Park hours will be 7:00 a.m. until 9:00 p.m. daily.

Visitors are reminded to follow basic rules when visiting:

- Exit the park prior to gates being locked at 9:00 p.m.
- Safety regulations will be enforced, including helmet laws, no double riding.
- All vehicles operated off-highway must have whip-flags, spark arrestor and appropriate muffler.
- All vehicles must be registered.
- Fires are allowed in approved metal containers only. Ground fires and gathering of local fuels is prohibited.
- Drinking and driving is not allowed.

Daphne Greene, Deputy Director of the OHMVR Division expressed her gratitude to the County. "The OHMVR Division of California State Parks is grateful for the partnership we have with the County and appreciate their hard work to make this transfer complete. We look forward to working with all of the community to provide much needed OHV recreational opportunities in this unique location".

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